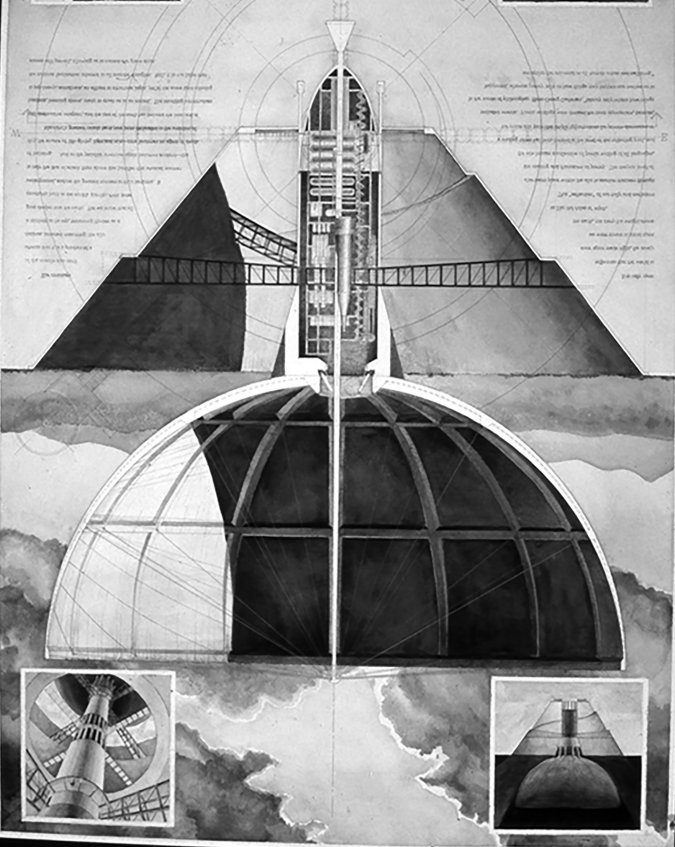




PROJECT ATLAS



The structure of the missile silo itself reveals that it is a product of a curious, inverted reasoning: the silo is thickest at its top, becoming thinner as it goes deeper into the earth. Yet we know that all structures built in the earth's gravity, even those underground, endure the greatest stresses at their bottoms. It is only the fear of attack from above that justifies this unusual manner of building. And so the peculiar inversion again becomes evident--the sky, the source of life-giving light and rain--now becomes an agent of death.

Mankind's greatest minds have now been dedicated to the creation of self-destructive weapons, and the fate of the earth has become the heaviest of burdens, looming above, ready to crush us in an instant. The resulting construction is top-heavy, monstrous, an affront to structural logic, yet at the same time offering the sublime fascination inherent in all suicidal thoughts. Still, it is our hope that reason will prevail, allowing us to correct our grave error. It is only upon reflection that the world is once again made right, for surely we were meant to stand upon the earth, not carry its weight above us like the Atlas of myth.

This "reflection" of our folly and our hopes also takes place within the silo in another manner: through the reading and discussion of poetry. The deepest level of the silo houses a collection of poetic writing of all languages, a reading room has been created at the level of the reflecting pool, and the entire silo provides ample opportunities for private discussion or secluded reverie. Poetic writings were deemed the most appropriate, because, as Hans-Georg Gadamer observed, "history only relates how things happened, whereas poetry tells us how things may happen and teaches us to recognize the universal in all human action and suffering."

Dan Willis with Merilee Meacock
